

County of Santa Clara

Public Health Department

Health Officer
976 Lenzen Avenue, 2nd Floor
San José, CA 95126
408.792.5040



August 18, 2020

Re: Childhood Vaccinations and Wellness Care for the Upcoming School Year

Dear Parent and/or Guardian:

The start of the 2020-2021 school year is upon us. It is important that childhood vaccinations and tuberculosis (TB) assessments are up to date. Vaccinations are crucial to prevent children from getting sick outside of school settings. Although there continues to be uncertainty around when schools may resume in-person instruction, vaccinations are also still required for school admission. Families should take steps now to get required childhood vaccinations and TB assessments.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Vaccinations will prevent an estimated 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children born in the last 20 years
- There were several outbreaks of measles and whooping cough in recent years. These diseases are extremely contagious and can be very serious, especially for babies and young children. Over 25% of children younger than five years old who had measles had to be hospitalized for conditions that can lead to pneumonia, brain damage, deafness, and death.
- However, during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, childhood vaccinations plummeted. From mid-March to mid-April, doctors ordered about 2.5 million fewer doses of routine flu shots and 250,000 fewer doses of measles-containing vaccines than the same time period in 2019.

While the new school year will look different than in past years, some things will stay the same.

- Immunization requirements remain in place for admission to school or childcare as well as for students advancing to the 7th grade in California. Visit <https://www.shotsforschool.org/> to review the required vaccinations, and then schedule an appointment with your health care provider for a well-child visit to obtain any needed vaccinations.
- If your child is enrolling in a Santa Clara County school or childcare for the first time, your child will also need a TB risk assessment and, if necessary, a TB test. Visit <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/DiseaseInformation/TbResources/Documents/ra-school-entry.pdf> for information and forms. TB risk assessments and TB tests may be completed when your child receives his/her vaccinations for school or childcare. If your child's vaccinations are already up-to-date, you can complete the TB risk assessment and the TB test, if needed, with your child's health care provider at any time within the first 30 days of your child's enrollment in school or childcare.

- Many dentists have resumed dental care services. If your child has not been to the dentist in the past year, contact your dentist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible to avoid untreated cavities or infections that may impact their success at school.
- Many children and families have social and emotional needs associated with the closure of schools, summer programming and other needed resources. Check in with your child. If you need assistance, call the California Parent and Youth Helpline for resources and referrals that support parent and youth during the current COVID-19 pandemic. They are available seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Call or text 1-855-4-A-PARENT (855-427-2736) for services in English, Spanish and other languages. For more information, please visit: <https://caparentyouthhelpline.org/>.

During this pandemic, routine health care, TB assessments, and vaccination of children are critical to protecting our children's health and wellbeing. Let's work together to ensure that all students, whether studying in-person or virtually, are healthy and ready to learn.

Sincerely,



Sara H. Cody, M.D.
Health Officer and Director
Public Health Department
County of Santa Clara



Mary Ann Dewan, Ph.D.
County Superintendent of Schools
Santa Clara County